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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000196

SENSITIVE  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [LY](#) [SU](#) [UN](#) [FR](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CD](#)  
SUBJECT: JOUBERT TO DEBY: TRANSLATE BATTLEFIELD VICTORY  
INTO DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS BY REACHING OUT TO "CERTAIN REBELS"

REF: NDJAMENA 195

Classified By: AMB LOUIS J. NIGRO FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (C) Visiting French Presidential Advisor Joubert issued a demarche to President Deby and senior aides May 23, urging the GOC to translate its recent victories on the battlefield into diplomatic successes by exercising great care in its approach to Sudan, by reaching out to some of the Chad rebel groups who might be willing to talk seriously, and by returning to international mediation efforts aimed at normalizing Chad-Sudan relations. Deby and other GOC figures received this advice coldly and insisted that Chad -- victimized, isolated and abandoned diplomatically -- would continue to strike at Chad rebels including in Sudan, but would not seek confrontation with Sudanese Armed Forces, because Chad's enemies understood only "the language of force." Even so, Joubert would try to arrange a Sarkozy telcon with Deby to press him on reaching out to "certain rebel chiefs" whose taste for war might be waning. Joubert said that Libya was moving toward supporting UN involvement in a Chad-Sudan border observation mechanism, because Tripoli feared that if the UN were unsuccessful in Chad and if the French left, the vacuum would be filled by the United States, including militarily. The French message to Deby tracks very closely with ours, although the French are far less worried about GOC-JEM military links than we are. That the Libyans are suddenly keen to see the UN and France stay the course in Chad, and may be willing to accept MINURCAT involvement in operating a border observation mechanism, at just the moment when the GOC seems interested in pursuing links with AFRICOM (Reftel), is good news, even if it stems from fear of USG extension in the region. This is an action message: See para ¶8. END SUMMARY.

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ELECTIONS AND REFORM  
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¶2. (C) Visiting French Presidential Advisor Joubert (along with French Ambassador Bruno Foucher and Joubert aide Romain Serman) briefed me on a May 23 meeting with President Deby and a May 24 meeting with Infrastructure Minister Younousmi. Joubert said he made two main points to Deby. First, the GOC should not be distracted from its domestic agenda -- elections and reform -- by security concerns, however legitimate. That domestic agenda reinforced rather than contradicted Chad's foreign and security policy, especially regarding Sudan and Chad rebels.

13. (C) Second, the GOC should try to translate its recent victories on the battlefield into diplomatic successes by exercising great care in its approach to Sudan and by reaching out to some of the Chad rebel groups opposed to Deby. Chad should practice magnanimity in victory and take advantage of the rebels' military defeat to split rebel ranks by reaching out to certain chieftains who might be re-thinking their future prospects as warlords and could be amenable to a renewed diplomatic approach. Joubert mentioned Arab rebel leader Soubiane and Ouaddaian rebel leader Hassabalah as two who might/might warm to such an initiative.

Joubert said he thought that Geneva might be a possible venue for the GOC to meet rebels ready to make a deal. He noted that the Geneva-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) and the EU's Georg Lennkh could be possible Geneva "facilitators" of a GOC-Chad rebel meetings. A foreign venue would expose probable Sudanese pressure on rebels who expressed interest, if they proved unable to leave Khartoum for Geneva.

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"A LOGIC OF WAR"  
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14. (C) Joubert said that Deby had been mostly silent in response to Joubert's demarche, confining himself to repeating his talking points regarding Chad's victimization by Sudan, abandonment by African and Arab states, and diplomatic isolation in the region. Foucher noted that talking to Deby required "an interpretation of his silences," but Younousmi was more expansive, emphasizing that Chad rebels and Sudan understood only the language of force and that Chad would continue to strike at Chad rebels including

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in Sudan, but would not seek confrontation with Sudanese Armed Forces. (NOTE: We believe that Chadian air action against Chad rebels in Sudan continues. END NOTE.) "They are locked in a logic of war," Joubert commented. Even so, Joubert said he would try to arrange a Sarkozy telcon with Deby to press him on reaching out to "certain rebel chiefs" whose enthusiasm for "the maquis" might be waning. Joubert said he would also take this idea to Libya (his next stop) to see if and how the Libyans could be helpful.

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LIBYA, THE UN, AND CHAD  
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15. (C) Joubert said that Libya was showing much more tolerance for the idea of UN involvement in a Chad-Sudan border observation mechanism than previously. The Libyans seemed to be more open to the idea of increasing UN involvement and to that of a continued French military presence in Chad, because Tripoli feared that if the UN were unsuccessful in Chad and -- especially -- if the French left Chad, the vacuum would be filled by the United States, including militarily. Such an outcome would be infinitely worse, in Tripoli's current view.

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THE USG MESSAGE  
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16. (SBU) I briefed the French on my meeting May 22 with Ambassador Bechir, noting that our demarches were happily and remarkably similar. I described our attempt to convince the GOC to "seize the moment" to exploit diplomatically its recent military successes by reaching out to Chad rebels who might be newly responsive to reconciliation, including by adding a new element to the Sirte process, such as a special GOC POC for rebels; by ending its military involvement with JEM; by exercising restraint regarding Sudan, especially militarily; and by continuing to participate in international mediation efforts to normalize Chad-Sudan relations. I said that we had urged a visit by FORMIN Faki to Washington, but

that the GOC had to "deliver" on some of those USG priorities.

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COMMENT  
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17. (C) The French message to Deby tracks very closely with ours, although the French are far less worried about GOC-JEM military links than we are (Reftel). That the Libyans are suddenly keen to see the UN and France stay the course in Chad, and may be willing to accept MINURCAT involvement in operating a border observation mechanism, at just the moment when the GOC seems interested in pursuing links with AFRICOM (Reftel), is good news, even if it stems from fear of U.S. extension in the region. END COMMENT.

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ACTION REQUEST  
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18. (C) That the Department consider a call by SE Gration or another senior official to President Deby to reinforce our demarches here as well as the largely consonant French demarches. (SE Gration might also want to call Joubert after the latter finishes his Tripoli meetings.)  
NIGRO